

[Anthony]

[Interview?]

Marie Carter

Anthony,

New Mexico

1,000 words

Anthony

Old Timers Dictionary

In

Detail

There is no doubt, that to-day and not to-morrow, is the propitious time to collect and preserve some of the true stories of this Great Southwest. For there are not many of the early settlers or old-timers left. Many, who were the pathfinders for us, have passed away, leaving no records of the heroic parts they played in the historical drama of our country.

Take one old-timer for instance--one of the oldest pioneers of our community. Her house is old, too, but it has not withstood the ravage of time near so well as she. When I asked her how long she lived in Anthony, she laughed and replied:

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"Gracious, child! Why don't you ask me how long I've lived in New Mexico? 'Cause if you get any sense out of my story I'll have to start from the beginnin; over in Lincoln County, where we located before comin' to Dona Ana."

"What year was that?"

1881. We moved to Anthony in 1897. My first husband had been out in this country before, but as I told you, Lincoln County. Before he went to Lincoln, tho, he drove a freight train across the plains from Kansas to Colorado. [C. 18 - ???]

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It was slow travel, too, 'cause they drove ox teams in them days. Besides, if they wasn't watchin' for Indians, they was a slowin' up to let the buffalo go by."

"And where were you at that time?"

"Back in Missouri a waitin! and when he come back home we was married, and started on our honeymoon. After visitin' some of his kin folks at Farmington, Missouri we bought us a covered wagon for the rest of the trip . "

" That must have been exciting," I said.

"Yes, it was. The first thing we run into, after passing the Navajo Indian Reservation a little ways, was about three hundred redskins on horseback, and I guess the only reason they didn't scalp us was the fact that they was too drunk to see us. Them that could still drink was a reelin' from side to side, and them that couldn't hold anymore were asleep on their horses' neck. They was the real thing too--feathers, blankets, bare legs and moccasins. Some of them wore little aprons for pants.

"What tribe were they?"

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"Navajos."

"Were you afraid?"

"I didn't flinch. And when they passed on my husband patted me on the shoulder. I guess he thought I was pretty brave."

"You certainly were," I said.

"We had to be in them days. And on the upper Peneasco, where we first settled, every man and women faced the same problems. Then we moved a little lower down, to Mayhill, New Mexico, the town my father, Henry Mayhill, homesteaded. I was the first postmaster. Mayhill, is in Otero County. So is the Mescalero Indian Reservation. We had lots of Indian scares and never knew what them 3 wild Apaches were goin' to do next. I hated the old squaws. Sometimes they'd knock at my door, and when I'd open it, there they'd be, all wrapped up in blankets. They always traveled in pairs. They wanted water but they couldn't understand me, and I couldn't understand them. So they'd grunt away down in their throats, open their mouths, and point at the hole in their faces."

Mary Coe Belvins was the wife of Jim Coe, a man who knew Billy the Kid and liked him. She gave birth to the second white child on the upper Peneasco, a creek, sometimes called a "river." The upper and the lower Peneasco was seperated by a dry basin for about twelve miles.

The Coes moved to Anthony, New Mexico in the year of 1897. They homesteaded a ranch Northeast of Anthony, where they lived for forty-five years. It was a stock farm, and they pumped their water with a steam engine, which Mrs. Coe ran, while Mr. Coe cut wood to feed it. After their homestead was proved up they moved into town. In 1909 they sold their

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ranch to the government for a target range. Mary Coe is now Mrs. Blevins, and is seventy-five years old. She was born in Missouri in the year 1837, June the 1st.

The other day I dropped into our local drygoods store to chat with a friend, and old-timer, who has lived in our community since the year of 1901.

"What," I inquired, "did Anthony look like when you located here?"

"Lordy, me!" she exclaimed, "I wish you could have seen it. All this business section on th' highway was jest a wagon road. We drove horses 'n' buggies in them days, 'n' wagons, of course. It took us a whole day to get anywhere--south of El Paso, or north of Las Cruces. S-cuse, me." She opened the stove door to expectorate; then explained: "It's stuff. Bin chewin' it for twenty years, 'n' ain't got used to it yet."

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I waited, until my friend had reclosed the stove door, then resumed my quizzing.

" Where was the principal business street when you located here?"

" West of th' Santa Fe Tracks. Guess how many houses was on that street?" I see you can't guess," she added quickly, so I'll have to tell you. There was five. I run a little notion store, 'n' Charley Miller run a store next door. He sold whiskey but had to quit, 'cause the Mexicans would get drunk in his place 'n' start fights. One day he got so mad that he took all his whiskey barrels 'n' dumped 'em in th' street."

" I suppose land was cheap," I said.

I'll say it was. Good valley land ranged from eight to ten dollars an acre," she said.

"Twenty-five dollars was fancy price."

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The street referred to by this old-timer, in 1901, was a mere country lane, with narrow trails branching off in different directions. One trail turned north to the town of Mesquite. A second trail turned west to the Rio Grand and Bosque, or low land.

To-day, the ranch land known as the "Dairy Farm," commands a top price, but in 1901 it was bought by a Mr. Howser for six dollars an acre. Mr. Howser levelled the land and sold it to C.F. Carpenter for twelve dollars an acre. Mr. Carpenter made some improvements and sold it to the El Paso Dairy Farm Company. This company bought the ranch to raise alfalfa and grain to feed their cattle. At the present time the principal crops are cotton and sugar-beet seed. The seed is shipped to Colorado to grow sugar beets.

In the early days of this town the chief amusements were picnics and barbecues. The men usually barbecued the beef. Sometimes they remained up 5 all night preparing, cooking, basting, and turning it on the spit. As one old-timer commented, "ye cna't hurry barbecue."

Mrs. O.C. Story, born 1872, Metropolis, Ill.

Came to Antony, New Mexico in a covered wagon. In the year of 1901. Mrs Story is a successful business woman.

Anthony, N. Mex.

April 17, 1937

Mr. Lea Rowland

State Administrator

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Writer's Project

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Rowland:

Your recent letter has cleared up several things for me. Now I believe I understand more fully what you require. Whenever I omit anything essential to the development of a story it is because my informant lacks the desired information. Henceforth, however, I shall do my best to secure it.

Now I shall proceed to tell you more about the "Old Main Street" of our community. It isn't a very long street, in fact, if measured, I doubt if it would be as long as the shortest city block. Although, refurbished, most of the houses have that aged allure so obviously lacking on the new main street. Perhaps if it could speak it would say: I am the street; old but superior; the pioneer rock upon which the new street built its success. I was a busy street when the new street was a mere wagon road. What does the new street know about the [hardships?], stamina, struggles and achievements of the early pioneers[md;]etc.

Mrs. O.C. Story, who had a sick husband, and two small children, brought them west in a covered wagon. (I have the story of that trip) At that time houses were scarce in the little village of Anthony. She had to have a place to live, so bought the house in which Mrs. Coleman lived and kept boarders. After buying the house, which is still a store building, she also kept boarders. At a later date, however, she started a notion store. That same notion store was the nucleus for the dry-goods store which she conducts on the new main street today. It seems that the boarding house business flourished in the old days because Anthony was a stopping place for travelers. Mrs. Alvarez kept boarders, too. Charley Miller, who seems to factor in all of the old-timers stories, ran the old Valley Mercantile store, adjoining Mrs. Story's place of business.

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I shall endeavor to procure all of the data I possibly, can on the [Rafugio?] Grant. Thanking you for your courteous and helpful letter, I am,

Sincerely yours,